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# Wesleyan-Arminianism and Mild-Calvinism Distinctions

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**WESLEYAN-ARMINIANISM  
AND  
MILD-CALVINISM DISTINCTIONS**

**BY**

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CLASSROOM LECTURES

WESLEYAN-ARMINIANISM AND MILD-CALVINISM DISTINCTIONS

By

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April, 1960

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(Transcribed From Tape Recordings)

though Pelagius himself may have believed in the necessity for Christ's death (and there is evidence to believe that he did so believe personally) still in the system that arose from his teaching, it may be assumed that the death of Christ was not necessary to salvation. Any man by the power of his own will could attain to holiness.

3. Another Christian leader, Augustine, who had heard Pelagius or knew of his teaching, considered it to be very dangerous to Christian faith, and in order to correct the error, taught the following points. Notice the course of his reason: (1) God is absolutely sovereign. He is all-powerful. No one can stand against the will of God. (2) Fallen man is absolutely powerless in himself to will anything good. He is totally evil and helpless. (3) If a man wills to do anything, it is because God makes him will to do it. Since men are sinners, they cannot turn to God. So if anyone is saved, it is because God compels his will to turn to God. (4) Salvation is all of grace and nothing of personal response whatever. If he is saved, man must be saved because God turns his will, apart from his own initiative, or his own will. (5) If Christ died for all men, as some were saying, then all men would be saved. God's will cannot be resisted. (6) He made the observation that not all men are saved. (7) Therefore, God must have chosen those who would be saved and left the rest in sin, and damnable. Christ died only for those who were chosen to be saved. In this way Augustine arrived at the doctrine of predestination. Personal predestination to him was not a Biblical doctrine but the conclusion of his own line of reason, which he believed was Biblical. His logic compelled him to make God fully responsible for men's salvation even to the personal choice of those who would be saved. We must note again that his doctrine of predestination was not an "a priori" with him; it was the conclusion to his line of reasoning.

Now since Augustine was so important a person to Christian theology we should note some things about him. (1) His views were extreme and

exaggerated, because he was trying to correct an opposite error. This often happens in controversy. (2) Actually in his preaching he did not hold these views. He believed in free choice. This will be noted by Arminius later on who, in attempting to trace the source of the doctrine of personal predestination as taught by the Church at the time he was living, went back to Augustine and found that he preached a doctrine which his theology did not permit. This has been so often the case in Christian history. (3) His system, as represented by the points given above, is only one side of his theology. He also held that salvation was by baptism only. That is, the Church must initiate a person into the Kingdom of God by baptism. Now of course these two systems do not hang together. Is one predestined in the secret councils of God's will or is he saved by baptism which is administered by the Church? He was not bothered by this ambiguity, though the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church have picked up the two sides and each has lifted the one to the exclusion of the other. (4) we should note his extreme view of predestination was not accepted by the general Church. (5) About 850 A.D., I believe, a man by the name of Gottschalk added to the predestination to salvation which Augustine taught, the complementary doctrine which he felt was logically correct, predestination to damnation, or double predestination. Gottschalk's extreme view was rejected by the Church.

We might also note there are some contrasts of importance. Pelagius wanted to preserve human freedom and moral responsibility, which was necessary and right to do. Augustine wanted to preserve the doctrine of grace, or the initiative of God, which was also right. But each in over-emphasizing his particular truth tended to lose the opposite truth. To Pelagius, grace Pelagius lost a sense of the need for the grace of God. ~~Augustine~~ meant simply God's love in a benevolent sense or an influence which might help us to do right. While with Augustine, grace was the divine cause of

every action and the cause which is irresistible, since it comes from God whose will cannot be resisted by man. Neither one of these definitions of grace is thoroughly Biblical, and we will need to reconstruct a better definition of grace later, giving greater attention to a Biblical analysis of the word.

## LECTURE II

This lecture has to do with the relation of these various men to the Church and to theology.

### I. Augustine's relation to the Church

The Catholic Church is Augustinian in choosing Augustine's view of baptism. Only those who are baptized can be saved. But all who are baptized are saved. There is a sort of predestination buried in the theology of the Roman Catholic Church, but it is overshadowed very much by the baptismal regeneration which is the hallmark of the Catholic Church. Then the Roman Catholic Church over-emphasized the importance of the Church in salvation. They said men are saved in and by the Church. The Reformation was a return to the Biblical doctrine of salvation, which is salvation by faith or justification by faith. This is not faith in the Church, not obedience to the Church, but personal faith in and obedience to Christ. Luther and Calvin then rejected Augustinian baptismal regeneration but taught Augustine's doctrine of predestination or salvation by God's decree. This was an attempt to get away from salvation by works alone which they felt the Catholic Church taught, and their doctrine was an over-stress on the sovereignty of God with a logical need to emphasize personal election to salvation to avoid universalism. Augustine believed in and taught divine election to salvation, but refrained from taking the next step which would be election to damnation.

## II. John Calvin's Relation to the Church.

In noting Calvin's relation to the church and to the Reformation we must remember that he was trying to bring into clear focus the thoughts of a people who had broken away from the Catholic Church and who needed leadership. After having been under the domination of the church for so long and to have broken away from it was psychologically difficult, and it took a very courageous, firm, and positive, logic-bound system to give them a sense of security and direction. They had no theology books and very little teaching, and some of them fell into errors as the Anabaptists did in Germany. Calvin was born in France and helped give a Protestant theology to the Protestant Church. It was a strong statement, extremely logical in form which the people could get hold of, memorize and believe. They needed this to hold them steady. Calvin built a University in Geneva, Switzerland, where he was the head of the city-state. This University is still in Geneva, is very vigorous, and just celebrated its four hundredth anniversary a year or two ago. To this young University the young Protestant ministers went to study from all over Europe because it stood high academically and gave them a good foundation in Protestant thinking. In this way Calvin's doctrine was spread over Europe. When Calvin died, Theodore Beza took his place in the university as the head of the Theology Department.

We want to note Calvin's views. (1) He taught Augustine's view on predestination and added to it election to damnation which is double predestination. This had been voted out by earlier councils in the church and now was being made an orthodox belief by the reformer. While Augustine's view of predestination was a conclusion to his own logic, Calvin began his theology on the assumption that personal predestination was true. Neither Augustine nor Calvin built theology on Scriptural exegesis. Both proposed a doctrine of salvation and made

that doctrine interpret Scripture. Calvin knew his view could be interpreted as fatalism, but he tried to avoid that by saying that it was not fate that determined those who would be saved but a personal, loving, good God. God was not unfair to damn some, because no man deserves to be saved, and every man should rejoice that any man was chosen. Even a soul in hell, he said, should rejoice that God was just and right.

Calvin had a contradictory set of beliefs as did Augustine. His theology was double predestination, but his preaching was based upon belief in personal moral responsibility. The "Institutes" which comprise his systematic theology is built on the belief in double predestination, but his commentaries on the Bible are warm-hearted, evangelistic and basically built on the idea that men have free wills to the point at least of accepting or rejecting God. Here again we find that one's theology and one's preaching are not in harmony with one another.

### III. Theodore Beza's Relation to the Church

Beza took the place of Calvin in the university. Beza carried to another step the logic which was developed through Augustine and carried on by Calvin. Calvin and Augustine were both too deeply religious and practical to carry their logic to its ultimate conclusion. Beza said that if a man is helpless and God's grace cannot be resisted, then God causes men to sin. Calvin would not say that. In fact, he held back from the speculative conclusions of his logic. Beza said that God decreed that men should sin, and since God is eternal, He must have made that decree from all eternity. This became the basis for the Supralapsarian view of High Calvinism, the decrees of which follow:

(1) The decree to elect some men to be saved. This precedes creation.



(2) The decree to create all men both elect and nonelect.

(3) The decree to permit the fall. A decree meant to cause the fall.

(4) The decree to provide salvation for the elect. We note that Christ is an afterthought and is of lesser importance than the decree.

(5) The decree to apply salvation to the elect, that is, to save the elect. It would be irresistible grace, of course. These views Beza was teaching in Geneva, and the young preachers were imbibing them and spreading them all over Europe and into Holland.

Now to anticipate the Arminius' story we might complete the logic at this point. Arminius was a student of Beza, and for reasons which we will give after a while, he came to question this view. He said as he looked at this logical system, "If you want to build your theology on logic rather than on the Word of God, you must accept the final step in your logic, that is, the conclusion to your own system. Because if God causes men to sin then He is virtually the author of sin. In fact, He is the one great sinner in the universe." Now Beza answered hotly, "I did not say that God is the author of sin." Arminius answered kindly, "I did not say that you were teaching that God is the author of sin, but I said that if you hold to your logic, this is the inevitable conclusion." And so we see that through Augustine who concluded that God predestined individuals to salvation and in Calvin adding that God predestined every man to be saved or damned--the saved to salvation, the damned to hell, and to Beza who picked it up saying, "If God predestines He causes sin", there developed a theological system which many evangelical, Biblical students felt was contrary to Biblical teaching. Into this kind of situation came Arminius.

### Lecture #3

#### IV. James Arminius' Relation to the Church

James Arminius was born in Oudewater, Holland, in 1560. His father died when he was quite a small child. His mother was not able to rear the child and the city-state of Amsterdam, (that is, the guild in the city which was connected with the largest church) took on the support of the boy, for he showed great promise. They gave him a good education, exacting the promise from him that he would pastor the church if they called him to do so. In any case he was to submit his major plans to the church. He lived to see both his mother and brothers murdered in a great political, Catholic massacre. He was sent to Geneva where he studied under Beza. He was taught the supralapsarian view of that teacher. There is some question that he ever believed it fully, but in any case he did not challenge it in his preaching. He returned from Geneva to become pastor of the large Amsterdam church which post he held for fifteen years. He was a brilliant preacher, a very gifted Bible teacher and, from all we can ascertain from those who knew him, he was a real saint of God. In 1589 an event occurred of importance to our subject. The extreme supralapsarian view was being taught in Holland as it was in other countries. A Dutch layman by the name of Koornhert began to criticize the high Calvinistic position. He was a scholar and was speaking with great authority and conviction. Many people were following him and breaking away from the church. This is the complication---Calvinism was the State religion and High Calvinism was the theological form of it so that actually High Calvinism was identified as the State religion. Therefore if anyone criticized the form of religion (or the supralapsarian form of its expression) it was interpreted as a criticism of the political system. This layman was not only accused of criticizing the theology, but also of working against the government.

Arminius was a scholar, and as such, was asked to study this layman's teaching and refute it, giving a reply to it which could be used throughout the country. So Arminius began a serious study of predestination from the Bible itself and particularly in the book of Romans. He found that he could not support the supralapsarian form of predestination from the Bible. In order to come to a right position on salvation he began to study the Bible, particularly Romans chapters 7 and 9, which is the Calvinistic stronghold. He discovered that the Bible does not teach the kind of predestination Beza was teaching. Then he studied the writings of the Church Fathers, going back to Augustine and those before him to show that none of the accepted church fathers taught either Beza's type of predestination or even Calvin's double predestination. Arminius compiles this evidence in a document which was the result of a most thorough and extensive examination of the writings of the fathers. All these men taught that God extended His grace to every man, making everyone morally responsible and, because of grace, able to accept or reject the gospel call. Surprisingly, Augustine himself, not only before the Pelagian controversy but after it, taught full moral responsibility. As a theologian he was a rigid predestinarian; as a preacher he pressed the claims of the gospel as if men were capable of acceptance or rejection.

Beza's supralapsarianism, Arminius pointed out, was compelled by logic not Scriptural exegesis. If God decreed that some should sin, He Himself must be the author of sin and the only one sinner in the universe.

Arminius became such an authority on this subject that he won every argument that he was permitted to take part in by a sound exegesis of Scripture and by a thorough understanding and knowledge of church teaching.

No one dared to challenge him publicly because he knew his subject so well. So they began to talk about him behind his back and to misquote him and to lift his statements out of context, and thereby actually to lie about him. This was painful to him, and he could not find those who were doing this so he could answer them and give them the answer he felt was satisfactory. He could never make them stand up and be counted. He begged for a chance to answer his enemies because he wanted the truth, not his own way. He asked for a council. He wanted this to be brought up to public debate, not for the sake of defending himself, but for the sake of noting what was true and what was not true. He deplored the problem, the trouble, the intrigue, the lack of peace which was accumulating in the church because of this problem. He was a man of peace; he wanted the church to be a fellowship. He deplored a rent in the body of Christ. He felt this was the only way the church could manifest and testify to the grace of God, and he did all he could to bring the problem out into the open.

#### Arminius' Teaching

He insisted that the word of God, not the opinions of men, was authority. Since this is the case, it behooves men to find out what the word says. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, was refuting the very type of predestination which the opinions of men were raising to the status of God's word. The Jews believed they were predestined as a race to salvation and that this predestination saved them. It was precisely to refute this doctrine that Paul wrote. Romans is not a refutation of divine predestination, as such, but a careful distinction between general or historical predestination concerning which God always has the final word, and personal responsibility relative to salvation. Salvation is always by faith, never by decree. To fail to distinguish between these is to distort Christian teaching. That which Paul so clearly lays down ought never to be allowed to confuse the Christian church.

Arminius asked these questions: (1) Is the word of man to prevail over the Word of God? Which is going to be the basis of our judgment now, man's word or God's Word? (2) Are the opinions of men to prevail over other men's consciences? They wanted Arminius to quit preaching the Bible. They wanted him to interpret the Bible in the way they were teaching it. They gave him full freedom of the Bible provided he would bend his teaching toward their views, and so Arminius asked the first question, Is the word of man to prevail over the Word of God, and reminded them that no two of them agreed as to the order of decrees. They could not even agree together on their doctrine of predestination. He asked, "Who am I to follow--God's Word or you who cannot even agree among yourselves?"

Once more, the central problem was a political one. The State-Church affiliation was Calvinistic but Calvinism in supralapsarian form. To challenge supralapsarianism was interpreted as treason against the government. Therefore Arminius was considered wrong, not because he believed the Bible, but because he dared to say that the Bible was more authoritative than the creed which gave divine authority to the State. Everyone was convinced that Arminius interpreted the Bible correctly. That was never an issue at any time, but Arminius made the Bible the final authority, and for this he and his followers were denounced as heretical. This is the background of the Synod of Dort.

When I was travelling in Holland, we drove through a town called Dortrecht. We were interested in the cathedrals there and we found this very large stone church. It was not until we were

in it that I discovered that this was the place where many sessions of the Synod of Dort were held. Arminius, of course, did not take part in this Synod because he had died prior to its meeting but his friends carried on his work.

After Arminius' death in 1609 his followers, known as the Remonstrants, continued the struggle for religious and political liberty. But there were two issues involved. We cannot understand the Synod of Dort without understanding these two issues; (1) A view of predestination and the moral freedom of man, and (2) Toleration, or, Is a man's conscience to be bound to God or man? May a man read the Bible and think for himself or must he be bound by the formulation of the creed? The specific issue of the day was, Shall it be decreed that every minister sign the creedal statement every year before he is given a post in the church? It was both a theological and a political issue. One of the most brilliant jurists of any time, the originator of international law, came up at this time to defend Arminius. His name was Hugo Grotius. He had earned a doctorate by the time he was fifteen years old and is known as one of the most brilliant geniuses of all time. He was defending human rights against the domination of political authority which stifled personal responsibility to God and others. His concept of international relations, daring in his day, is the foundation of contemporary international law, now taken for granted. In line with his understanding he proposed, incidentally, the governmental theory of the atonement, which is held even today by many evangelical people.

Grotius was attracted to the Arminians because of the basic

similarity of beliefs and the Biblical support they found for the kind of moral responsibility common to Arminius' theology and Grotius' idea of human freedom. Both ideas were grounded in the same concept of God and His relation to mankind. Both men advocated separation of Church and State. It may be interesting here to note the relationship between the high Calvinism of Beza and the divine authority assumed by the government. If God orders the affairs of men imperiously, and the government is the organ of God, then what the government orders is God's will and people must submit. Personal decision or conscience is inconceivable in this context. Grotius and Arminius were agreed that the Bible taught that men were responsible to God primarily. Therefore any power, religious or political, (unconditional election or autocracy) which curbed moral freedom was inconsistent with God's order. Grotius pressed the political aspect. Arminius contended for the religious truth.

Another man we should mention is Simon Episcopius, who assumed Remonstrant leadership when Arminius died. Episcopius and Grotius drew up the five points of Arminianism. That is the reason we are putting his name here. These two men interpreted Arminius fairly well. We will see they did not deny the grace of God but held a very sound, Biblical view. But there was another follower of Arminius that took another direction from Arminius' belief. His name was Limborch. This man began to talk about freedom to the extent that he lost the whole sense of the grace of God. He over-emphasized free will, until he lost the whole sense of dependence on God. This led to Unitarianism and ultimately to liberalism as we know it. Now it is not interpreting

Arminius correctly to say that he was the father of this kind of a movement. But usually today we hear that Arminius was the father of liberalism. Actually, we are trying to show by history that Arminius held evangelical views completely. These two men, Episcopius and Grotius were called "Remonstrants" because they remonstrated against the oppression of the Government and theological supralapsarianism. So they drew up these five points to explain their position before the Government.



#### Lecture #4

We have already noticed that Arminius began to defend two particular positions: (1) freedom of conscience and (2) a more Biblical view of predestination. It might be interesting at this point to note that Arminius taught in Leyden University, Holland. He taught theology and lectured in this subject. But he was supposed to stay only in the Old Testament when he taught doctrine. One day he used the New Testament to prove one of his doctrines. Gomarus, the man who was teaching the New Testament highly resented this fact. He said, "The New Testament is my area, you stay out of it." Much trouble was made for Arminius over that. Arminius reminded them that the New Testament was in the Bible too and he really felt he should be able to refer to it once in a while. I mention this only to show the kind of opposition Arminius received.

The Arminian party drew up a statement of their views so as to be understood by the whole church and to defend their own position. These views stand in contrast to those which were held by Beza and Gomarus and which later were incorporated into the Five Points decreed by the Synod of Dort as the test of orthodoxy.

#### The Five Points:

1. Unconditional election. Individual election to salvation, and, in fact, every act of man, was determined before all time in the secret council of God. Election is in respect of human destiny and apart from any consideration of human will.
2. Limited Atonement. The death of Christ avails only for those who are elected.
3. Total Depravity. No good desire, ability or act is to be found in man. Sin blights every part of him. His will is in complete

bondage and no possibility exists in him to will God's will.

4. Irresistible grace. Grace and God's causal will are practically equated. If men are totally helpless, then only grace can move their wills and resistance to God's will is impossible.
5. Unconditional Eternal Security, or efficacious grace, If men cannot resist God's will, then logically, no one who receives God's grace can be lost. What God begins He must complete.

The impossibility of maintaining genuine moral responsibility in this context of theological thinking moved Arminius to contest it. In contrast to the above five points Arminius and his followers drew up that which they believed more Biblical. These now are the Arminian or Remonstrant Articles:

1. God decreed that in Christ all who believed would be saved.
2. Christ died for all men.
3. Man needs the grace of God because he is depraved in nature and unable to save himself.
4. This grace of God is resistible. All men can receive it if they will but they may resist it and responsibly reject God's will.
5. Men may apostatize, or they may be finally lost even though they once were believers.

Now with these five articles, the Arminian Party was given some months of toleration. They were permitted to preach and teach. But Grotius and others among them were arrested for treason because of the complication of issues already mentioned. To hold a trial for these men, including Grotius, they called the Synod of Dort and the two major issues then were to be decided. Arminius died before the Synod was held. The Synod convened between 1618 and 1619 and

the Remonstrants' doctrine was rejected and declared to be heretical. The Calvinist' five points which I gave you a few moments ago were accepted and recognized as the official position of Christian orthodoxy.

But the Synod of Dort was not a fair assembly in that it did not represent both sides. It was attended by many scores of Calvinists who were free to discuss issues from the floor. The Arminians were all imprisoned and brought in in chains---they were put on one side of the hall and not permitted to say anything. Grotius was imprisoned for life and all of his possessions were taken from him. Barnfeldt was beheaded. This is one of the sad periods, filled with dark events in Church History. It must be remembered that by failing to distinguish clearly between the theological and political problems the decisions do not represent the true picture. A political situation was confused by theology and theology distorted by politics. It is to be regreted that the Church has not yet cleared up this unfortunate misunderstanding.

We want now to analyze Arminius' view for we want to see exactly what his position was. The main point at issue here is a view of predestination. Arminius could have said, "I just reject the Calvinistic position", but he was a scholar enough to examine thoroughly the position of those with whom he did not agree so that he would not unfairly misrepresent them. He distinguished three different views of Calvinistic predestination. We will give them to you for they are important in understanding theology today. We would remember at this point that Arminius did not say that predestination was wrong but he did say some of their teachings were not Biblical.

#### 1. Supralapsarianism.

A. The decree to elect some to be saved and to damn all others.

This is double predestination.

B. The decree to create all men, both elect and non-elect.

C. The decree to permit the fall.

D. The decree to provide salvation for the elect.

E. The decree to apply salvation to the elect.

## 2. Infralapsarianism.

A. The decree to create all men.

B. The decree to permit the fall.

C. The decree to provide salvation for men.

D. The decree to elect those who believe and leave the rest to damnation.

E. The decree to apply salvation to those who believe.

But Arminius found a third view which he analyzes very thoroughly in his work.

## 3. Sublapsarianism.

One of the Calvinistic theologians believed that this was the position of the synod of Dort.

A. The decree to create all men.

B. The decree to permit the fall.

C. The decree to elect those who believe and leave in condemnation those who do not believe.

D. The decree to provide salvation for men.

E. The decree to apply salvation to those who believe.

The main difference in these three positions:

(1) Between supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism---

In supralapsarianism we have the decree to elect men to salvation before creation.

But in infralapsarianism we have creation before permission of the fall.

(2) In the supralapsarian view salvation is said to be only for the elect, in the other two <sup>or</sup> views, it is not stated but only says that salvation is for men.

Another important distinction is between the second and third view.

(3) In Infralapsarianism the decree to provide salvation for men comes before the election of those who will be saved. Whereas sublapsarianism said that election would come before the decree to provide salvation, therefore it is assumed that salvation would be only for the elect.

Thus there was great variance in the order of the decrees, in the various schools of thought in Calvinism. One other distinction is seen:

(4) Supralapsarianism says that God foredetermines those who will be saved. But in Infralapsarianism and in Sublapsarianism it says those who would believe would be saved. It looks like there is a little more room for freedom in these latter two than in supralapsarianism.

Now Arminius rejected these three on the basis of their own logic. He believed that each one of them would make God the author of sin. His order of decrees was:

- A. To permit the fall of man;
- B. To send the Son to be a full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.
- C. On the ground to remit all original sin, and to give such grace as would enable all to attain eternal life;
- D. Those who improve that grace and persevere to the end are ordained to be saved. (Christian Theology, Vol. II H.O.Wiley page 108, Beacon Hill Press)

## Lecture #5.

Arminius believed there were certain principles which would have to be honored in a proper doctrine of predestination if one consulted Biblical teaching. These are as follows:

1. Predestination must be understood Christologically. That is, Christ is the source of salvation and not the arbitrary will of God. This was very important to Arminius for he felt salvation was through Christ and not through decrees and therefore had to begin with Christ.

2. He believed the decree of salvation must be evangelical in concept. By this he meant that salvation must always be by faith in Christ and never by works of merit, always personal rather than sacerdotal.

3. He said that by no inherent logic must it be made possible to say that God is the author of sin. We must keep the idea from our minds that God is in anyway the cause of human sin.

4. Man must not be made the author of salvation or in any sense his own saviour.

5. The doctrine of predestination must be Biblical and not simply logical or philosophical.

Now I will give you Arminius' own system of the decrees. This is his positive presentation.

1. Jesus Christ is the object of election. This is the important distinction between high Calvinism and Arminianism in which it is not the individual which is made to be the object of election but it is Christ who is elected to be the Saviour of men. Christ is the Elect. Those who respond to the invitation of the Gospel are then the elected. This means the whole concept of predestination is changed from individual to class predestination. Those who

believe will be saved. Salvation is only in Christ. Christ is Saviour and as such He is <sup>the</sup> Door rather than election being the door. Arminius was consistently Christo-centric.

2. Election of the Church. God decreed to receive into favor all those who would repeat and believe in Christ. So then the Church would be composed of those who would believe and this is the company of those elect in Christ.

3. The appointment of means or the way He would achieve this thing. God would assure that the necessary means would be provided to achieve this. This means that grace would be provided which would make it possible for any man, if he would, to believe in Christ and follow Him. This is prevenient grace which preserves every man savable.

4. The election of individuals. According to Arminius, when God foresaw that these would believe then he predestined that they would be saved. It was on the basis of foreknowledge. This does not mean that Arminius felt that salvation was by works, that faith was to be interpreted as works. But he did mean that every man would be given the power to believe, but he himself would have to do the believing. He could have the power to believe but God would not believe for him. The power is from God, the act must be man's own.

Many times when people criticize the view of predestination on the basis of foreknowledge, they feel it says that man is meritorious because he has faith. But Arminius believed that God gave every man the power so it was not a part of merit but of exercising the power God had given.

Just a final word on the contribution that Arminius made to theology. It has been called an ethical criticism of predestination.

This meant that Arminius saw in the Calvinistic type of decrees, the possibility of resting so contentedly on God's will that moral effort would no longer be exercised. Calvin did not teach this sort of thing. But it is true that many who followed the Calvinistic system became what we call "antinomian". Antinomianism means ignoring the moral law. In other words, if Christ has saved me from all my sins, past, present and future, I do not have to keep the law. I don't have to exercise any moral responsibility since the responsibility is all on God and my efforts toward reformation can only be considered arrogance in God's sight.

We will summarize the contributions of Arminius to theology:

(1) He stressed a theology which made grace strengthen moral responsibility rather than to weaken it.

(2) He made predestination Christo-centric and Biblical rather than deterministic and philosophical.

Now we want to do a brief critical analysis of this position as a whole, not particularly to say we agree or disagree, but we want to see what the problems are in it.

(1) Both the Calvinists and the Arminians spoke about the decrees of God.

When we speak of decrees we are speaking in philosophical language. Both used the same language. The question raised here is whether the idea of decrees, as used by these two men, is a Biblical idea. The meaning of "decree" is, an appointment of God, in which He ordains a certain thing to come to pass. The Wesleyan feels the use of "decree" is too arbitrary in its connotations. In relation to the moral order it is questionable whether the word can be used in a Biblical sense. Basically Calvinism, according to its statement, made man's salvation a matter of decree, God's decree. It was an uncondit-



ional choice. It was a choice of individuals. But with the Arminians, it was salvation by faith in Christ, not by decree. It was conditional, that is, conditioned on the faith of the individual.

(2) There was much difference in the order of decrees. Disagreement on order was a point which divided Calvinism into various groups as we have already seen. At least it may be said that Scripture is not clear on the point of the chronological order of the decrees and therefore the theological differences resulting from this debate are not valid.

(3) That raises the questions relative to those points where the two men used the same terms. I would like to now point out some of the main differences between these views. I no longer want to compare Arminianism and Calvinism because both of them include these differences of opinion, so that one could not say all of this is Calvinism or all of this is Arminianism. The first difference is its approach to theology. One begins on a "priori" principles. This means that he assumes certain things which he feels are self-evident and true. These assumptions determine every religious truth before the teaching of the Bible is consulted. In fact, the Bible is interpreted in the light of these prior assumptions. Because Calvinism and Arminianism divide at the point of these assumptions it will be well to notice them more carefully.

When we start with "the doctrine of God", this begins to show where our problems lie. An idea of God is presumed which we have in our minds before we ask the Scriptures what it has to say about it. Many people start out their theology with an idea of God. They feel they know what God can do and what He cannot do; what He knows and cannot know, before they ever look into the Scripture. This is

what Calvin did in his "Institutes". But there are many theologians in every tradition who have done the same thing. The problem here is that a philosophical concept of God takes precedence over the revelation given in Scripture as to who God is and what He is like. As a consequence Scripture is interpreted in the light of philosophy rather than being an independent source of truth.

Another word which is misunderstood in this particular approach to Theology is the word "Holiness". Many times the word "Holiness" or the idea of holiness is defined completely outside of any Scriptural teaching. It is considered to be absolute perfection, which is only possible to God Himself. It could not possibly include any immaturity or any weakness or fault or any incompleteness in any sense at all. I have heard people trying to define this and say, "God's moral law must be so perfect that no human being could possibly keep them. It is unthinkable---it is inconceivable that God would require anything less than this absolute perfection." Therefore the conclusion is, no man can keep such laws. "Now obviously God requires them but He has to do it in order to show us how imperfect we are---just to keep us humble." The only trouble is we cannot find this kind of law in the Bible, we have to imagine it before we ever come to the Bible. In Scripture there is a seriousness which does not support this irresponsible view of holiness and God's nature.

Another word influenced by this approach to Theology is the word "sin". The tendency is to define sin without referring to the Bible. It is said that any deviation from absolute perfection would be sin. This is surely not the Biblical concept and may actually distort Biblical interpretation.

The other view begins not with so-called self-evident truths

but with a careful study of Scriptural teaching. These words, God, holiness, sin, grace and sanctification, are the very words which we cannot define properly. It was to do so that the Bible was given to us. When the Biblical meaning is kept clear, theological problems tend to disappear. This second kind of approach to theology attempts to solve philosophical problems in the light of Scriptural teaching. There are two problems of theological significance which we will mention:

(1) The problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom. Is God the author of all human action or do men originate independent action? Is human will determined or free. This is the problem that has divided the Church for many centuries so we do not hope to end the discussion here. But it is not simply the Protestant church which separates at this point. The Catholic church is divided as well, e.g., the Dominican order is radically predestinarian while the Franciscans believe in free will. The solution, in the second approach is not to argue the philosophical concept of free will, but to maintain the necessity for moral responsibility which is a very different thing.

(2) The problem raised by the Biblical statement that God hardened some men's hearts. This seems to suggest that the freedom required for any measure of moral responsibility is cancelled out by God's will and action. The solution offered to this problem is to more carefully examine the context of these and other like passages to determine the Biblical meaning. This will be attempted in a subsequent lecture.

## Lecture #6

Explanation of the chart which follows:

1. The Synod of Dort is the dividing line (No. 1) between these two traditions. At this Synod, Arminianism was clearly defined against Calvinism, point by point. Although only a small part of Calvinism was represented at this Dutch Synod, gradually it's decrees were accepted as authoritative for much, if not all, of Calvinism. In fact, Protestant orthodoxy is defined by this statement in Calvinistic circles today.

2. There are varying degrees of adherence to each of these two positions from a rigid and logically consistent position to a mild, less logical but more evangelical position. For the sake of clarity the extreme positions are placed on the outer limits of line 2 (up and down)

3. Lines 3 and 4 indicate the place beyond where the position is no longer evangelical. That is, those whose theology falls here, for one reason or another, find no need to engage in evangelism. A call to repentance and faith is inconsistent with their understandings of God and man.

4. Beyond lines 5 and 6 (outward) lies that theology which breaks in some vital way with traditional Christianity.

5. Above line 5 are those called Neo-Orthodox. This is a group of people who hold to such a very radical Calvinism that they are caught in a deterministic system which separates them from any contact with God, holds them in philosophical and impersonal sin and forbids any evangelistic optimism.

6. Below line 6 is another extreme group called Liberals. God

to them, is so much a part of His creation that it actually is God. Since everything is God there is no need to implore men to repent and come to Him.

7. Between nos. 3 and 5 are those churches which are basically Christian but who overstress the sovereignty of God at the expense of human responsibility. They believe that God will save those who are to be saved without men going about preaching repentance. They are, in this sense, not evangelical.

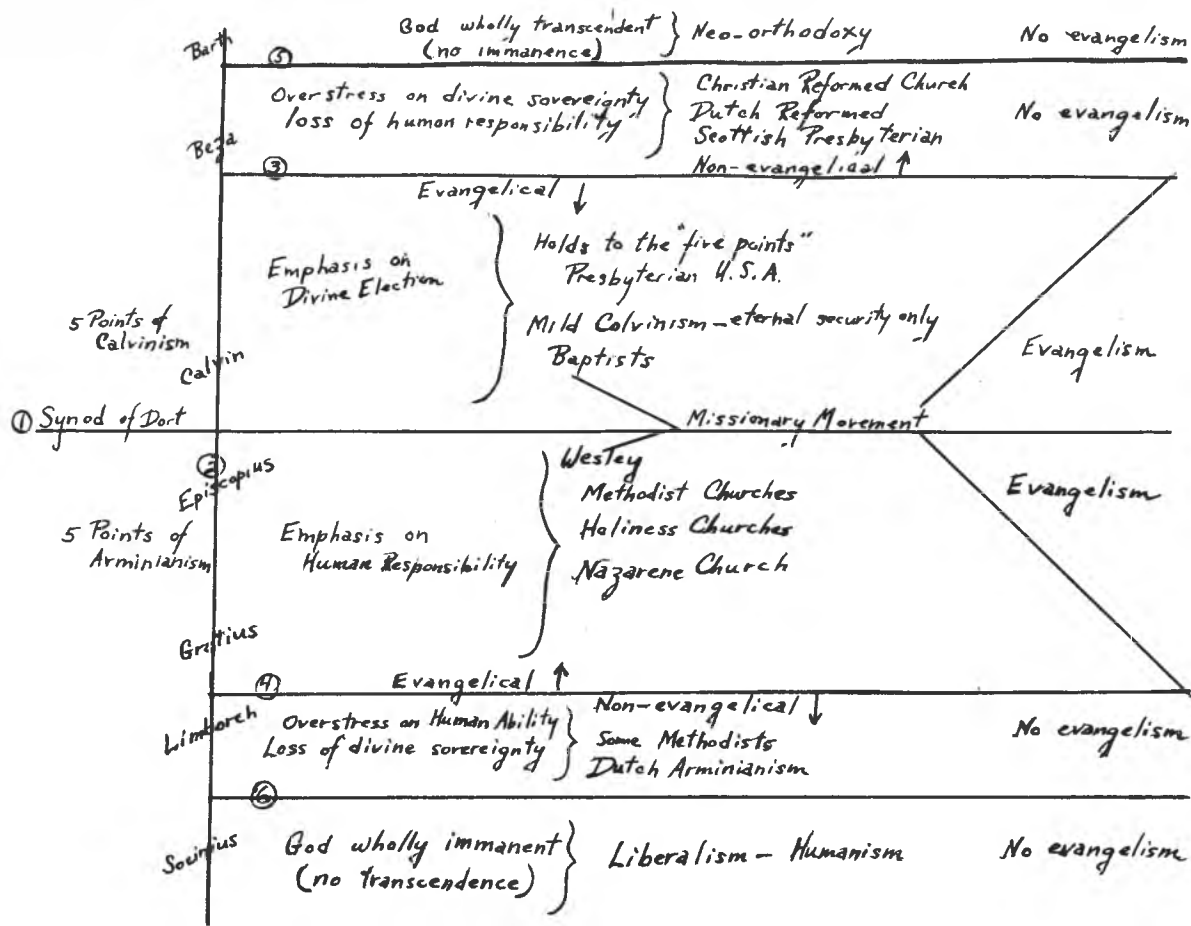
8. Between nos. 4 and 6 are the Arminians who have overstressed human freedom to the loss of God's sovereignty. Men may save themselves by discipline and good works and education and social service. Hence, though they are in a sense Christian, they are not evangelical.

9. Between 1 and 3 are the Mild Calvinists. Among these are the Presbyterian Churches. Some will hold a high view of God's sovereignty while others will hold a high view of human responsibility. There are many kinds of Presbyterians. Some will believe in election and eternal security, while some would only hold to eternal security. You will remember what eternal security is---it is the last of the 5 points, that is, those who were to be saved, cannot be lost because grace is irresistible. We will notice later on, that to hold only one of the five points breaks the logic---but we will discuss that when we see the Bible basis for these beliefs.

I am going to place the Baptist Groups in the Mild Calvinistic position though they reach down into the Arminian area. Some of them are quite Arminian in their beliefs. It is interesting to note that the average Baptist will say that he is not Calvinistic. It doesn't mean that he doesn't teach the doctrines here but he doesn't want to

say that he is following any man, such as Calvin. When I first encountered this, I was studying in a Baptist school and the professor said very clearly, 'I am not a Calvinist'. I thought, "How can he say that? He is going to be put out of school."

10. Between 1 and 4 lies the evangelical Arminian groups. You will remember the names of Episcopius and Grotius. These were the leaders in Arminian thought after the death of Arminius. Grotius is remembered for toleration and freedom of conscience. Limborch tended too far to the left. He overemphasized freedom and we place him below the line of the evangelical groups. Wesley belongs in the evangelical Arminian group. He was taught in the Calvinist tradition but he turned against the teaching of predestination of the anti-nomian type which was predominant in England in his day. Wesley found Arminius' teaching more Biblical than Calvin's or Episcopius'. In it was a place for real evangelism and genuine growth in holiness. We have already seen how close Wesley came to Calvin's views but Wesley stressed human responsibility consistently. Under his ministry a spiritual dynamic came to people. The infilling of the Spirit caused the most powerful missionary impetus in modern times. Under the impact of it the Baptists were impelled to tremendous missionary activity. In the proper union of truths common to both Calvinism and Arminianism evangelism thrives. The very loss of such evangelism indicates that theology and experience is drifting away toward the edges where one extreme or the other swallows up the impulse to invite men to Christ.



Some of the likenesses and differences, significant to this study follows:

I. Arminius shared with Calvin the following teachings:

1. The unity of the race in Adam.
2. In Adam all men sinned and share the guilt of his sin.
3. All men are "children of wrath."
4. Only by grace can any man be saved.

II. Arminius differed from the Calvinists at these points:

1. A sovereign God supports a full measure of moral responsibility in man.
2. Preventive grace (or grace given universally to all men) is more Biblical than "common grace" which holds in it no promise of salvation. There is no distinction between the universal and special "call".
3. Predestination is Christ-centered and defines the only way to salvation rather than individual-centered which makes the decrees the cause of salvation.
4. Christ, the second man, provided a remedy for all men by His free grace to cancel out provisionally the curse incurred by Adam the first man.
5. No man is guilty for Adam's actual sin but all men share the cause for sin which comes under God's judgment.

III. Wesley agreed with Arminius in teaching that:

1. God is sovereign.
2. Men are wholly born in sin.
3. Men are preserved morally responsible by grace.
4. Ability to co-operate with God's grace is by the Holy Spirit.
5. The obligation to obedience, and the danger of apostasy, are Biblical teaching which take moral responsibility seriously.



#### IV. The one important difference between Wesley and Arminius:

Arminius believed that the ability that God gives men to respond to grace, is given because God is just. God would be unjust if He didn't do it. On the other side Wesley believed that this ability which God gave us to respond to grace was purely of God's love. It was not something God had to do but He did it because He wanted to do it.

One should also say in defense of Arminius that he believed that free will or ability is the result of grace. Free will is given to us by grace. It is not a natural ability left over from the fall of man. So he did not minimize grace, he actually emphasized it. He taught that grace raised mankind to the place of responsibility. Grace then preserves all men capable of being saved. Grace will give the capacity to believe but then man must use the capacity which has been given to him.

#### V. Wesley's views, which joins the best of Calvinism and Arminianism.

1. Admits entire moral depravity.
2. Denies that any man in this state has any power to co-operate with the grace of God.
3. Asserts that the guilt-fall through Adam was removed by justification of all through Christ.
4. The ability to co-operate is of the Holy Spirit, through the universal influence of the redemption of Christ.

It will be seen that Wesley carried out the logic implicit in Arminius' insights and teachings.

II. The second point: There are two widely held views even among the Calvinists. The Hyper-Calvinists say that God determines every human act on the basis of His own secret will. A theologian who holds this view very strongly is William Shedd. He died about 1900, his works are now republished and studied in Calvinistic institutions. The other view among Calvinists, which is quite different from the above, is that God has elected men to be saved on the basis of His foreknowledge. Theissen represents this view. Within Calvinism there lies two contradictory philosophies and we cannot continue with our study without recognizing this.

III. The third point has to do with a method of Biblical interpretation which comes out of these philosophies. We could line up a list of scriptures and try the problem in that way. This has been the old method of proving a doctrine. So until we look behind a method of Biblical interpretation we will not be able to solve our problem this way. This past week-end I was reviewing Shedd and Theissen and I noticed that they both used the same list of scriptures but derived different meanings from them. Let us see how the Hyper-Calvinist interprets some of these things and I think our problem will be clear.

Shedd takes the scriptures in which "foreknowledge" is used and says that foreknowledge means personal predestination. There is no basis for making that interpretation. It is arbitrary. This word "foreknowledge" bothers him and so it must be interpreted to read "God's choice of individuals".

In this Hyper-Calvinistic system all these scriptures are re-interpreted. All scriptures which seem to teach freedom of the will are re-interpreted in the light of belief in personal predestination. Now this is an interesting point he makes: He says, "The doctrine of predestination is too hard for new Christians, you should never teach predestination to babes in Christ. This is for settled, mature Christians only."

This reminds us of the Gnostic view which says there is a lower level of truth for the "soul-ish" people and then there is a higher level for spiritual people. The above view of predestination bears distinct Gnostic resemblances in this as well as more important respects.

#### Mild-Calvinist Position

The Mild-Calvinist position as represented by Theissen takes

these same scriptures and interprets them in a different way. He says the call of God is serious and sincere. God is not mocking, He sends the call out and intends that all shall heed it. Scripture says that Christ died for all men. They say that any man may be saved. The call of God goes out to all men and any man may answer "yes" or "no". Every man is given faith enough to believe if he will. You will notice this is very much the same as what we would say. Now the difference between Mild-Calvinism and Wesleyanism is in the doctrine of eternal security. The Hyper-Calvinist holds to that hard logic (5 points) beginning with the Sovereignty of God and running clear down through persevering grace. The eternal security of the Hyper-Calvinists is based on the belief that God's will determines everything, so it is logically consistent. But the Mild-Calvinist rejects the first four decrees and only retains the last, or, eternal security. There is no logic to fall back on and so they interpret scripture to defend this. Here is the type of argument they use: Regeneration implants new life in the soul which is immortal. Since this new life is a change in the inner nature no man can have any control over it. It is done below consciousness. It is apart from man's own will. This cannot be lost unless God would perform another supernatural act and kill that spiritual life. This God will not do.

There are two main views of eternal security. There are some who say that when one accepts Christ, he cannot be lost however far into sin he may go. This view does not consider a high ethical life as essential to salvation. It does not stress a high concept of the Christian life as necessary to the Christian status. I should probably state it this way: It does not mean that those who teach this are careless about their ethical life. In fact, the ethical teach-

ing is very high and they stress the need for giving a good witness for Christ, and living a good life. But they do say that no sin after one has been saved can cause to believer to be lost. No matter how deep in sin he may be when death comes, his standing before God is in no way jeopardized because Christ's righteousness has been transferred to him.

I sat in a room where a woman was dying of cancer. Her son, who was about 24 or 25 years old was sitting in the room with us. She was trying to encourage the boy. He had not attended Church much in his older life. She said to him, "I had you baptized when you were a baby and so you are perfectly safe. Don't worry whether you are going to hell or not." Of course, this is a very extreme view and a good Christian will never take it but some theologians make such thinking possible.

The other variation in eternal security teaching is that if one sins it proves he was never born again. So one is constantly wondering whether he is actually born again or not. There is no security of faith because everytime one does something wrong it simply proves he has never been saved. This group, the Mild-Calvinists, must interpret all scriptures which seem to warn believers that they could be lost, in a way consistent with eternal security. We can see that when we are examining the scriptures in the next few days that we will have to be a little more careful in our interpretation of them to see whether they actually say what others and we declare they say.

IV. There is one other matter we need to look at before we begin to study these scriptures specifically. That has to do with those scriptures which seem to teach that God causes the hardened

heart. Here are some examples:

Exodus---In a number of places it says God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

Romans 10---Paul quotes this and says, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will harden whom I will harden.

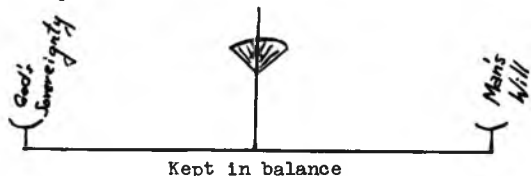
In the Gospels---Jesus teaches in parables. This has been interpreted to mean that he did so in order to keep them from knowing the truth. It would sound as if He were trying to harden their hearts rather than to help them to see the truth.

This brings us right up to the problem, Does the Bible teach that God causes all events or is there a place where man can choose? On one hand, the Bible certainly does teach God's sovereignty, but if we teach this and miss the moral responsibility in man we lose a whole section in the Bible which teaches that we are responsible to choose. If we accept only those parts of scripture which teach human freedom, or human responsibility, we are apt to lose the authority, the power, and the majesty of God. Both kinds of passages are in the Bible. Is it possible to account for both God's sovereignty and man's full moral responsibility in one theological system?

In attempting a solution we are often told that we must keep both God's sovereignty and human moral freedom together in balance. It is said that both are important and that neither should be lost or be overemphasized. A common question which this always raises helps to point out the weakness of this view. "Which is more important, God's sovereignty or man's freedom?" This question assumes that these two things are contradictory to each other. It assumes that one would destroy the other if it could. There seems to be two logical

systems which have no common ground at all. So poor human beings have to try to squeeze two conflicting ideas into their protesting minds.

We will put this on a scale. On one side we have God's sovereignty. On the other side we will put man's will. These two must be kept in careful balance, it is said. The only way to do this is to try to keep thinking about it and never giving up. This is what we call an academic exercise. It is abstract and unreal because one is never sure where these two ideas come together in real life. In other words, it is so hard to do that the average man gives it up. It actually doesn't matter.



But I think there is a better illustration than that. Here is a circle representing God's sovereignty. He is sovereign, absolutely sovereign. But He in His sovereign will has created beings whom He has endowed with free will. So free will does not stand as a challenge or a threat to God's sovereignty but it is within the control of God's sovereignty. The error is in saying, God is sovereign therefore no one else can have free will. It is more Biblical to say that God being sovereign was able in His power to share this sovereignty with creatures who He made capable of choosing between moral alternatives.



In a full moral sense man is genuinely free, though his freedom is limited. Man does not make the rules for freedom, God makes the rules. I think we can get to a Biblical concept here. God is the author and cause of all things. That is the Old Testament and the New Testament concept. This was believed so thoroughly that they did not think of putting laws of nature between God and the world. God caused things without the intervening laws of nature which we presume. But there were two levels of cause in the concept of these scriptures. One is direct causation in all the natural order, in all the world, in all history. All is ordered by God. There is another that we call the moral order which is an indirect relationship. In the natural order one thing will lead to another inevitably. But in the moral order God put an intelligent mind between cause and effect. Now when you put a thinking mind between cause and effect, you have a choice this mind has to make. It cannot escape choosing. No intelligent person is free not to choose. It says, "I can go this way, or I can go that way." But this is not a freedom in the sense of being without responsibility, that is, we are not free to easily choose one way or another and never reap the consequences of it. We are not irresponsibly free. We may choose a way but we cannot escape the consequences of that way.

The Bible constantly tells us to choose good or evil, God or sin, life or death. We are confronted with this choice. Now irresponsible freedom would say, "If I choose sin I can get to heaven in my own way." But God says that we must not merely choose the goal we are to reach but we have to accept the consequences of our choice. We choose a whole line of consequences. We are not free not to accept the consequences of our choice. There is a good scripture at this



point:

"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Joshua 24:15

We have to have someone we serve, we have to be under a Master and we choose our Master. So if I choose sin, I will inevitably have to accept the consequences of that choice. Now when we are children and begin to make choices, we either choose one or the other, whether we are conscious of it or not. We commit ourselves one way or the other. Everyone we see is one who has committed himself to one way or another. Through the mercy of Christ there is constantly the way open for this person to change his direction and accept God and the new Master. So long as I am walking in sin and deliberately staying there of my own free choice my heart is hardened toward the light which God shines. The farther I go the more my heart is hardened. We may also say if one is a Christian the farther he goes in the Christian life, the fewer things tempt him to sin. He gets stronger along this line. This is the law of the moral life. One is strengthened in the way as one continues to choose the way. As a Christian we say he is stronger. A sinner is hardened. This is not a rule that free men make. It is the God-made rule which puts a boundary around freedom. It is perfectly proper to say--God strengthened that person and hardened another without in any way violating moral freedom.

According to the rule, under the law of the sovereignty of God what we do with what we hear will either make our hearts hard or tender, one or the other. Always the Bible makes its appeal to those who can hear, to those who are listening. It is as if we could if we would. Then if we close our minds and refuse there is a hardness comes. If we continue in this rejection of light, we get

so we can scarcely hear Him at all and His call doesn't make too much impression upon our minds. This doesn't mean that we are not called or it doesn't mean that the Father doesn't call us, but it means that we ourselves have put ourselves into this situation.

Will the Call of God be as effective to those who accept it as to those who reject it? Apparently from scripture, those who reject become less and less able to hear and they are less and less inclined to hear. The ones that heed the call, that keep a sensitive spirit, are able to understand ever more clearly.

Now, what about predestination? In the scripture there are two kinds of predestination. One is the historical order. God is going to have history turn out in a certain way. He knows what He wants to have accomplished and He is going to accomplish this in history. As God was ordering the steps of the Children of Israel in Egypt, it was necessary for Pharaoh to take a certain attitude toward them so that the historical sequence be assured. Paul says that God chose one of the twins before they were born and not the other to take a certain place of leadership in Hebrew history. But in none of these cases is personal salvation involved. Their personal relationship to God, their personal choice of God for their own salvation was not involved in this. It was that the purpose of God in history would be accomplished. In this sense God causes directly. He is sovereign. But in the inner heart of every man there is another use of the terms predestination and election.

God has ordained that salvation can only come through faith in Christ. Righteousness is not an arbitrary endowment by God on men. Righteousness is now, and always was by faith in God. The

hardening of Pharaoh's heart was not, in this case, a matter of personal salvation. Abraham's righteousness was not by God's decree or by a mystical gift of faith. The book of Hebrews (Chapter 11) tells us that, believing in God, he obeyed and this is his appropriation of God's saving favor. God absolutely orders the major events of history but personal salvation depends upon the individuals' heart attitude toward God. Even in history, as in individual human life, God often puts great moral alternatives before us. But the consequences of the choice are sovereignly determined by God, not man.

## Lecture #8

Yesterday we referred to predestination in the Book of Romans. It is interesting that from the Book of Romans, both the Predestinationists and those who believe in Free Will, take their teaching. So it looks like Paul didn't know what he was talking about and thus contradicted himself. It would be better to read Paul a little more deeply and really see what he was saying. We will find that both predestination and moral freedom are in this Book. Paul in Romans is refuting Jewish belief in predestination. These Jews believed they would be saved because they were destined to be saved. They were chosen to be saved by God. So this Book is to show there are two kinds of predestination, one a national history; the other the coming of the Saviour in whom alone is personal salvation. These are two very different things.

The first is the predestination of history. God decreed, if we want to use that word, that there would be a certain nation and a certain tribe within that nation, and certain persons who would be chosen, without any relation to their goodness or badness, who would be the ones through whom Christ would come. It wasn't a matter of whether one was good or bad, God was going to produce the one through whom Christ would come to the earth. This was absolute. Even though the Jews might fail in their purpose God could take up someone else to accomplish His purpose.

Jesus said God was able to raise up children of Abraham from stones. This, of course, was hyperbole to emphasize the relative unimportance of physical Israel. There are certain matters having to do with God's revelation of His will and Person which no fail-

ure on man's part is able to thwart.

But the other line of predestination is that men are only saved through faith in Christ. Paul says in Romans that before there was a nation of Israel, that Abraham was accounted righteous before God because of his faith. It is Christ who reveals the way of righteousness by faith. This is not a new way to salvation. It is the way it has always been. So when we say "salvation by faith", it is not salvation by decree or predestination. Saving faith is always a personal matter. This means that the individual opens or closes his heart to the invitation God extends to him. This is personal to the core and must not be confused with the ordering of history. These are the two movements in the Book of Romans. So both God's sovereignty and the moral responsibility of man are truths which do not conflict with one another but are within one framework and dovetail into one another in perfect harmony.

This is God's order. He is Master of History but He has made us, in His will, master of our destiny depending on whether we will accept Him or reject Him.

It might be good to emphasize this point. God has a will. He has determined that certain things will occur; for example, there will be a second coming of Christ. This will occur regardless of what we do. But we, as we are brought into fellowship with Him, can either relate ourselves to His will and become a part of it or reject it and we ourselves will be lost---God's will is not lost, but we are lost.

It is a very interesting study to notice Jesus' appeal to

people. This helps us see that all men have the capacity, under grace, to respond to God. We should probably say that the Arminian has been misunderstood at this point. It seems that we are teaching that men have enough goodness left over in themselves so that they can help themselves get saved. If this were true it would look as if men were able so to exercise faith that faith is a cause of salvation. But faith, the ability to respond to God, in fact all of rationality is maintained by grace. This ability to say "yes" to God and to follow Him and to respond to Him is itself an act of God's grace.

(In response to a question from the class) What about the example of Jonah? Is it not true that at first Jonah exercised his free will but then God exercised His sovereignty? Wasn't Jonah compelled to obey God? Yes, it is true. God used every device to get Jonah to do what he was supposed to do. But I think we would have to say that finally Jonah could have refused. He did once and we understand that he could have done so a second time. God is never dependent for His work upon whether we say yea or not, whether I personally say yes or not. If anyone continues to reject, God will use someone else and have him do the work. Now Jonah didn't go in a very good spirit and we would say that his message would not be very effective. He just didn't want to go. But we are told in the scripture that sometimes even the wrath of men is made to praise Him. God will use the circumstances in the way He wants them used. But the result in the person who accepts or rejects, the salvation of the person, is another matter altogether.

(In response to a question regarding Rom. 9:15-16) This is not a discussion of personal salvation either of Moses or Pharaoh but of God's mastery of history for the purpose of revelation. It

is far too strong a statement to say the Bible teaches that Moses' will was under the sovereignty of God. Do you remember that Moses drew back from obeying God and God had someone else to do the work that Moses refused to do? God was not left without someone to do the thing that needed to be done. So far as Moses obeyed God, He was used. He was a man of God and His will was God's. But he was human and subject to the failures of men. Let me emphasize, this is not a matter of personal salvation but of historical ordering.

## Lecture #9

Today we want to look at some scripture references. We have seen how the Mild-Calvinists and the Hyper-Calvinists differ in their interpretation of the same scriptures. It is unfortunate when opposing groups hurl scriptures at one another and say "This is what it means", while the other says, "No, it means this." Our purpose is to come to a Biblical interpretation of scripture and not an interpretation that is determined by man's logical presuppositions and systems of philosophy.

If our study of scripture indicates that Christ died for ALL men, and that anyone may be saved, then our problem is not what difference there may be between ourselves and Hyper-Calvinism but between ourselves and Mild-Calvinism which teaches the universal call and eternal security. Mild-Calvinism only holds to eternal security as part of the decrees. So our difference of opinion is at that point and our study is focalized at this point.

I mention this so that we will be prepared to look at the scriptures next week and the teaching relative to our security in Christ. Today we will examine the passages of scripture which the strict Calvinist believes teaches that the gospel call is limited to the elect. These are supposed to be conclusive Biblical evidence that the Arminian is completely wrong about his belief that all men are called and may be saved.

I will first use the scriptures which the Hyper-Calvinists use to prove particular election is true. Particular election means the election of individual people.

(1) John 6:44: This one is used to indicate that only certain



people are chosen and other people are either neglected or chosen to damnation. This is the verse of scripture which says that "no one can come unto me except the Father draw him."<sup>4</sup> I became interested in the word "draw" and took time to study it thoroughly. According to the use of it in the Greek one would draw a net full of fishes, or draw water out of a well, or draw a sword. Sometimes it means to draw a person into a police court, or to a judgment hall. In every case of its use in the New Testament, it is used to indicate the whole thing is pulled up, not one thing out of another. It would not be like the magnet which draws up the iron pieces and leaves the pieces of wood. It is not selective but pulls the whole thing.

Now let me give some scriptures which help us in the understanding of the word. They speak directly on this matter of our relationship to God. This was such an interesting study that I can see a good sermon in it. In Heb. 10:38---the just shall live by faith but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him. Verse 39---"we are not of them that draw back unto perdition." There is another use in Heb. 7:19---"we have a better hope by which we draw nigh to God." Going back to Heb. 10:22 we have another verse which helps enrich this meaning. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Turn to James 4:8---"Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." John 12:32---"If I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all men unto me", these are the words of Jesus. Out of these usages there are two truths which come to our attention. The first is that when God draws, Man is drawn, apart from his own will---this is absolute. Jesus said, "All men"---"He will draw all men to Him." This is obviously not a drawing into salvation but is a drawing into a place where men must make a decision about it. So we are face to face with the fact that we are not free to avoid this

important decision. The call has gone out and we must decide one way or another. This would agree with the basic meaning of the word which means to pull the whole up to another level.

But there is a second aspect of drawing as the use of this word in scripture indicates. As we review the references there is the aspect of our drawing near to God. He has drawn us to the place where we make a decision. We must make this decision and either draw near or draw back. Therefore when we see the full use of this word in the New Testament, it would be difficult to maintain the teaching that it is a choosing of some and not a choosing of others. True to the whole appeal of the Gospel, God gives an opportunity and forces man to make a choice. There are two sides.

(2)The next scripture is John 15:16---"Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you." This is another one which is made to mean that only certain ones are chosen. We are trying to show that this is not necessarily the only interpretation of the verse. It is not proved in this passage that God chooses only certain ones to salvation and leaves others to damnation. It does say that those who are Jesus' servants or friends, as He calls them here, were chosen by God. But in this particular passage the subject under discussion is special service---that is, they are called to bear fruit. I think all of us recognize that God does choose out of a group, certain ones for special service. But election to salvation is not the teaching of this passage, in any sense.

(3) In Acts 13:48---"As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." What is the word used in the Chinese Bible? (The word used for ordained is predestined.) This is the background. They were having a revival, and the way it reads, it seems to say, on

the basis of the English and Chinese Bible that there were certain ones predestined to be saved and only those were saved. But as we look at it a little more thoroughly we begin to see that there may be another meaning to this. A word is used here to mean ordained or predestined which is never again in the New Testament translated predestined. It never has the meaning of being set aside or chosen, separated from others. It always means to set in order. That is, there will be a first and a second and thus on down through. What this really says in the Greek is that those who were ready, those who had come in under this patterning were brought in and were saved. This is a very different thing than to have certain ones picked out here, here and here. This is just the opposite. This is a very common thing in revivals and in evangelistic work. Usually when we hold a special series of meetings in a certain place there are just so many people who are brought up to the place where they are ready to accept Christ. Many people may sit and listen to the Gospel but the conviction of the Holy Spirit has not been deep enough and they just don't move during that time. I don't say this is the only interpretation but this is certainly defended by the words as they are used in this text. These are the scriptures we hear quoted to prove that God chooses certain ones to salvation but we feel they do not have to prove that meaning.

Let us add a few other scriptures which I think will help us to get the picture a little more clearly. These are the ones that give the Hyper-Calvinists trouble. Luke 19:10---"The son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Now this just looks like Jesus came to save the people that were lost. The ones who were sought out were those who were lost, not some of those who were lost but all of them. Since all men are lost so it seems clear from this

passage that Christ's atonement was not limited to a select number.

(2) Matt. 18:14---"It is not the will of the Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish." We must not forget John 3:16 It is one of the best-known verses and one of the best defenses we have for the openness of the Gospel. Read both the 16th and the 17th verses. To even think that God chooses some and rejects others robs this scripture of all of its meaning.

(3) II Cor. 5:14,15---Very clearly it is stated here that Christ died for all, that they should not live to themselves but to Him that died for them.

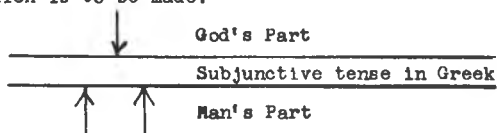
(4) Gal. 1:4, speaks of Christ who gave Himself for our sins. I Tim. 2:4 speaks of our Saviour who will have all men to be saved. Verse 6 of the same chapter speaks of Christ giving Himself as a ransom for all of us. I John 2:2, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Also I John 4:14, "The Father sent forth the Son to be the saviour of the world." Another verse which indicates the scope of Christ's redemption is Heb. 2:9--"Christ tasted death for every man". This certainly stresses the fact that Christ died for every man.

(5) We will take another group of scriptures which shows that the initiative is on God's side but the response must be on man's part. The first one we shall mention is John 3:16. Here is a truth which is not too obvious, perhaps it is clearer in the Chinese Bible, but it is not obvious in our English Bible. It says, "Whosoever keeps on believing in Him", not simply a moment of believing but keeps on believing in Him. The Greek form suggests that one has to keep on believing. Now this will come up again, but this past year I read from a Theologian who said that God gave us faith for one moment and

when that one moment of faith was over and salvation was achieved, we had no more responsibility to faith or believing whatever. This, of course, we cannot accept. So it is obvious that it is not merely an intellectual assent saying, "I believe" or "I accept" but it is another way of living---a whole life lived around Christ as the center instead of self and sin as the center.

The next verse, the 17th, has another interesting thing in the Greek. "God sent His son not to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved." The Greek tense in this case is very important to proper exegesis. It opens up a possibility but does not determine the result. It holds the door open but does not push anyone through the door against his will. All the barriers are removed but men must volunteer to enter and do so with God-given powers.

There are many New Testament scriptures which have this. Here is what God does for the whole world, yet there is this tense in the Greek which separates us from absolute decree. It is the subjunctive tense. It is the tense which is indefinite, it depends on a choice which is to be made.



This is the Bible way of avoiding universalism, or everybody being saved because Christ died for all men. The Hyper-Calvinist solves this problem by saying that God elects certain people and all others will be lost. The Mild-Calvinist solves the problem by respecting moral responsibility until one becomes a believer. (Then the in-

definiteness ends and men cannot be lost.) The Bible avoids the logical and moral problems involved by keeping moral responsibility within the framework of God's sovereign design. The Biblical grammar cannot be ignored in developing Christian theology.

## Lecture #10

From scripture we have been seeing its teachings concerning (1) God's initiative and (2) human responsibility in salvation. Last hour we were noting what God does for all men and how even the grammar of the Greek language teaches us that it is the responsibility of men to respond to God. We saw that God provides and then man must accept that which God makes possible. This was evident from the subjunctive tense of the Greek verbs.

Today I want to give some other scriptures which show our responsibility in another way. These are some of the scriptures which make an absolute requirement of the believer. It will be noted in these dozen or so scriptures that they are absolute requirements. These are things God asks us to do. These are not things that are done for us by God, but they are to be done by the believer. Many of them have alternatives so far as destiny is concerned. They are requirements relative to a personal attitude we must have and maintain. They seem to indicate that receiving forgiveness from God does not exhaust the obligations of the Gospel. Justification, in other words, does not insure final salvation apart from the deepest self-giving of the person to God and a continual devotion to Him.

The first reference is Rom. 6:11. To those in the sixth chapter who have been baptized into Christ is the requirement---"Reckon yourself dead to sin and alive to God." In the next verse, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body." In the sixteenth verse a very strong expression appears which is by way of explanation of what Paul has said already. "To whom ye yield your members, (that is your body) servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey

whether of sin to death or obedience to righteousness." . When we realize that this is written to those who are believers, we are faced with the truth that there is still an area in which very great care must be exercised lest there be a forfeiture or loss of relationship to God. 'This is not just loss of reward.' This is loss of life. This is death---spiritual death.

Romans 8:6. Here also we have the same alternative, "To be carnally minded (or to have the mind of the flesh) is death," but to have a spiritual mind is to have life and peace. It is rather significant that this should be advice given to believers.

Another passage that is interesting is Matt. 6:24. "No man can serve two masters." This again was preached to the disciples. Jesus is saying that there cannot be a divided heart. No Christian can maintain a divided heart and maintain his status in grace. In Matthew, chapters 10 and 16, Jesus talks about taking up the cross. One must take up his cross in order to be worthy to be a follower of Christ. This is not simply accepting forgiveness but is taking responsibility. But the believer is not free not to take up his cross. He loses his soul if he tries to avoid it.

Again in Ephesians 4:22---this says "to put off". Again, Paul is talking to believers. "Put away" the lie and "speak the truth", he continues. This is the tense in the Greek which says it is to be done abruptly. (It is the aorist tense.) In the 24th verse of the same chapter it says, "put on" the new man. We should add here Col. 3:9, where Paul is giving the same kind of advice, "Seeing that ye have put off the old man". These Christians have already done that. In Phil. 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which



was also in Christ Jesus". This passage says that we must take on this mind, we must have the same mind that was in Christ as He humbled Himself to save us.

One of the most interesting of these scriptures is in Gal. 6:7,8. Remember as we read this that it is addressed to believers. We usually preach this sermon to sinners. But here is something Paul felt was necessary for Christians to remember and do. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Sowing to the Spirit results in life but sowing to the flesh results in death. This is the Christian's alternative.

Another reference like this is Heb. 2:3. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Even though this had been addressed to sinners the personal responsibility of the individual is important. But this is addressed to Hebrew Christians--believers, and the exhortation is to continuance in the faith lest the punishment meted out to other rejectors of God's will be meted out to them.

Now, we conclude by these and other Bible passages that believing in one moment, that is, accepting by faith Christ's salvation is not enough. The Gospel requires much, much more than this. Those who hold there is no other obligation to Christian status than to simply have one moment when we accept Christ, have forgotten to read these important scriptures. There is a requirement from God to us for remaining in God's grace and that requirement is to maintain the same attitude that we took when we came into it.

## Eternal Security

With all of this in mind we shall begin to talk about the problem of eternal security, or the security of the believer. There are two parts to this very interesting subject. The first one is this, that there is a security, and second, there is a continuing responsibility on our part. The Arminian is so apt to stress the danger of backsliding that he is almost afraid to go to bed at night for fear the Lord will leave him. Or he may be afraid he may have a momentary lapse of faith or he may have a little failure and he is afraid God will leave him. Thus he enjoys no security. All of us have seen young people and perhaps older ones who are always wondering, "Am I saved or am I not saved? I didn't pray long enough this morning---I wonder if I am saved?" This is surely not the attitude of one who truly trusts God. The Bible, with all its warnings against apostasy, also teaches security in Christ.

Let us look at some scriptures which help us have faith in the abiding love of God and the stability which He provides us for maintaining our Christian experience. Rom. 8:35-39---"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Then in John 10:27-30 there is one phrase that is used a great deal by those who believe in unconditional eternal security---that no one can snatch the believer out of God's hand. This is true. We do not need to worry that God will let anything take us out of His hand. But it doesn't say that we of our own rejection may not ourselves come out from under His protecting care. Heb. 7:25---this has to do with the continuing work of Christ in our behalf. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." This has been

interpreted to mean that God would, without any respect to us at all, simply keep us from falling. But it is worded very carefully--- He is able to keep us, He is able to keep those who draw nigh to Him. There are two movements there. There are many others but I will mention only one or two. Notice Jude 24---"He is able to keep you from falling." Those who believe and try to prove unconditional eternal security will take just the 24th verse and forget to read the 21st verse, which says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." If we don't do that we put ourselves out of the place where God can guard us. But, under conditions which we are given grace enough to keep, there is eternal security.

### Faith

Now I think in order to better understand this we ought to examine two or three words, and see how they are used in scripture. One of them is faith. It is often assumed, when we hear the word, 'faith' or 'believing', it simply means we are mentally accepting some proposition or some statement about God. Therefore, if we come to the place where we accept the benefit of the atonement, then we are secure for the rest of our existence. In the Bible this is seldom, if ever, the meaning of faith. I have made quite a thorough study of 'faith', I can't bring the whole of it, but I will give you one or two statements regarding the conclusions. The first thing I observed after studying every example of the use of 'faith' in the New Testament was that all but three or four times it is in the present tense which indicates the necessity of continuing this attitude of believing. This whole matter of believing and having faith is not something one leaves behind when one is saved but a matter one has to continue and keep through life. It is a continuing attitude throughout life. But Biblical faith is not an emphasis on an intell-

actual act alone, it always refers to one's commitment to a center, an object of worship, self or God.

The second thing I observed that most verbs having to do with cleansing, putting off, putting on, sanctification, are decisive, momentary acts. Only the Christian believer is addressed. These words are used in messages to Christian believers and never to a sinner.

The third observation is that those words having to do with growth in the Christian life, transformation, renewing the mind are in the present continuing tense of the verbs. This must be continued throughout life. Coming back to the word 'faith', for we are not quite through with it, faith is not so much trusting in what God has done for us, as it is trusting God Himself. It is a personal trust. It is not merely something we believe about God or Christ. It is the beginning of a new life in which we commit ourselves completely to Him.

A good illustration would be the attitude we hold toward a bank, that is provided we have any money to put in the bank. We may say, I believe this bank is perfectly safe for my money---I believe that they will not steal my money and I believe that everybody ought to put their money in a bank. But suppose I should take my few dollars and put them in a can or jar somewhere and hide it in my house. Now I might say with my lips I believe the bank is perfectly safe but I am actually showing my distrust by hiding my money in the house. Always the New Testament use of the word 'faith' and 'believing' is to change our way of doing. We do not do the old way anymore. We believe God so much, that we turn around and obey Him.

Faith is not just a new power that is given to us which we do not have in ourselves, but it is using the same power that once we used to believe and trust in ourselves, now to believe in and trust God. It is shifting the object of our trust. The emphasis is not on the act of faith but the object of faith. The great transformation is not in the head (the ability to assent to a new proposition), nor in the basic constitution of the person (capacity for faith), but a transformation of the heart. A Christian believes and obeys "from the heart", says God's word. This is a moral and spiritual transformation.

We might illustrate it by using two or three scriptures. Rom. 1:16---the Gospel is the power of God to salvation to all those believing, that is continue to believe, they just simply live by a new trust in God. Gal. 3:22---this says the promise by faith of Jesus Christ "might be given" (here is a subjunctive again) to those who are believing. The best illustration we have is in Heb. 11, the great faith chapter. To everyone of these people who had faith, their faith was proved by the fact that they did something, they ventured out for God, they obeyed God.

Now let us look at some of the things that come to us by faith. Not simply justification but many other things come by faith and I give just a few. Of course, man is justified by faith as indicated in Romans. In Rom. 5:2, we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand. In Acts 15:9, it says their hearts were purified by faith. Acts 26:18--sanctified by faith. 11 Cor. 5:7, we walk by faith. That means we still have to keep believing in order to maintain our new walk. This is not by some act a long time

ago but it is a continuing of this faith. Gal. 2:20, Paul said he lived by faith in Christ. Eph. 3:17, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. Gal. 3:14 that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith. So the point we are trying to bring out here is that faith is very necessary. It is a continuing of this attitude toward God which is full of obedience and full of love and our whole life is lived with a new center, namely, Christ.

Faith appropriates and lays hold of and puts ones' hand out to grasp the grace which God gives us. The Calvinist is not correct in interpreting our position when he says that we are helping God out by our faith. We do not teach that salvation is partly by God and partly by man. Faith is exactly the end of all self-effort. It is the surrender to God; it is the surrender of all self-righteousness. We no longer trust ourselves, we trust God. This is what faith is. Faith is not just a mental, or intellectual act, but it is a moral act. It is obedience from the heart.

## Lecture #11

In order to answer some student questions a little better I will refer again to the New Testament. The problem has to do with the grammatical tense of the verb "believing", as it affects the theology of salvation. We will have to rely on conclusions made in a much more thorough study since that study is not available here to quote more fully.

1. All the passages which speak of believing in relation to assurance of salvation or the possession of "eternal life" or the condition of being in Christ are in the progressive present tense. (This tense indicates action begun in the past and continues on and on without reference to an end.)

Now I probably should give you a few scriptures which show the necessity for continuing in believing. The first one is in John 1:7---Christ came that all men through him (not in themselves but through Christ) might continue to believe. This is one of the illustrations of the continuing present verb. Another one appears in Acts 13:39---All those who continue believing are justified. Rom. 10:9---If thou believe in thy heart thou shalt be saved, or if you continue believing in your heart you will be saved. This is another example of the continuing present verb. Going back to John, in John 20:31 is another strong reference. The purpose of John's writing this book was that they might believe and that in believing they might have life in His name. Notice particularly that mention is frequently made to "in His name". It is important to believe and continue believing "in His name." "Name" in this connection is not just the word, but the nature of Christ. The name represents everything Christ is in power and goodness.

2. The only exceptions are those occasions in which there is a command or exhortation to a beginning of faith in Christ (as in Acts 16:31 where the Philippian jailor was instructed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ). The other exceptions are the testimonies given to an experience in the past. But when occasion comes to speak of one's faith in the present the tense changes from aorist to progressive present. Here is an illustration of it. In John 4:39, it says the Samaritans believed on Jesus because of the woman's story. The word "believed" here appears in the aorist tense. But in the same chapter, 4:42, when these same people speak about it we have the following words, "Now we are believing for ourselves." So it indicates that this was a beginning by way of historical testimony and then when they refer to it the verb is in the continuing present. That sort of thing runs throughout the New Testament. It doesn't mean that they believed at one moment and then did not do so any longer. It meant that what was once begun has continued to remain the case.

3. It is important to notice that the contrast is not between believing and not believing. It is between believing and being disobedient. This shows a moral implication. One illustration is in I Peter 2:7---Unto you which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient...He is a stone of stumbling. This significant contrast between faith and disobedience or rejection is very common in the New Testament and is a commentary on the Biblical meaning of faith.

4. We should make one more observation again. This is one we do not often hear, at least I have not often heard this emphasize-



ed. So often the emphasis is made upon the act of believing, that is, whether we believe or do not believe, rather than the scriptural emphasis on the one in whom we believe. We always believe in something. Everyone believes in something. It is in whom we believe that makes the difference between salvation and death. An illustration of this is found in Acts 19:1-5, where the story of the Ephesian brethren is located. Paul asked them a very interesting question and he said, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (That's the Greek word ing, incidentally, not the English.) What he is saying is this, In believing did you receive the Holy Spirit?

Here is the test of whether they had believed the right thing or not. They had received the baptism of John the Baptist and they believed in him and therefore they said, "We never even heard of the Holy Spirit". In the 4th verse they were directed to believe on Christ and in the 5th verse they were baptized in the name of Christ. It was Christ now who was the object of their faith. It is believing in Christ with all of our hearts (which means committing ourselves wholly to Him) which results in the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is the test of whether our faith is in the right object or not. This is proved in one other place and I will take time to give you that reference. In acts 15, when Peter was telling about the conversion of the Gentiles, the problem arose as to whether they had to keep the law of Moses to be saved. This was something that was bothering Peter for as a good Jew he thought it was necessary to keep the law of Moses. In verses 8-11, it says these Gentiles whose hearts had been purified by faith, (that is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ), had received the Holy Spirit and by this it was a proof to him that they had the same kind of

faith the Jews had. The conclusion is in the 11th verse which I think is very interesting. He concludes, as a Jew, that the Jews were under the same law that the Gentiles were. It is belief in Christ (that is, trusting in Christ) which would bring salvation, even for a Jew. That is very strong. There is much more work that needs to be done on the words "faith" and "belief" in the New Testament. It's a very rich word. In the New Testament, it never means believing a proposition with our minds alone. It is believing with the heart. It is a person committing himself to Christ. And an obedient faith in Christ is evidenced by the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is the final test of the validity of Christian faith.

Now, this long digression on the subject of faith was necessary to the best understanding of eternal security. We have noticed that faith is the condition of salvation, not just one aspect of salvation, such as justification, but all of it. That which God gives us by His grace we must receive by faith. We have also noticed that saving faith is a continuing relationship to God which progresses each day as we continue to trust Him. Security includes (1) what God does for us and (2) how we receive Him.

Keeping this in mind there is another Biblical truth which helps us to see these two sides to eternal security. We believe that the errors in theology have arisen because only one aspect of Biblical truth has been lifted away from the whole Biblical teaching and made to be whole in itself. Each aspect of truth must be kept close to every other one if we would be true to Biblical teaching.

#### The Relation of Faith to Justification, Regeneration and Sanctification.

There are three phases (or aspects) of salvation: justification,

regeneration and sanctification. The chronological order in which these are experienced is variously understood. The Catholic puts sanctification first. The Reformed or Calvinistic churches tend to put regeneration first and the Arminian sees Justification and regeneration as two sides to one event. Protestants are divided on the matter of sanctification. Some say justification and sanctification are both completed at conversion. Others say sanctification is only a progressive work in which the structure of sin is gradually broken down and the structure of holiness built up. Still others understand sanctification to be a second work of grace. Now, if all of these are important to salvation as the Bible says they are, how and when they are experienced is important and has a direct bearing on our problem of eternal security.

It will be noticed that each of these words is borrowed from some aspect of human life. Justification comes out of the court of law and is a legal term. Regeneration or new birth is a home term. Sanctification is a religious or temple word. If we are as careful to use these terms in their proper setting as the writers of the Bible we will find a solution to our problem. Never are these words confused. Salvation is such a big and all-inclusive thing that no one human word can express it. The Bible uses these three, and many others, and the complete picture of what God has for us is only possible when we see that each is a facet of the whole.

Justification expresses the legal aspect of salvation. It tells us that there is no condemnation. We are forgiven. There are some theologies which build their whole doctrine of redemption on just this one and so security would then be on the basis of a judicial sentence. When a whole doctrine of theology is built on this word

alone it is a distortion of truth. This is imputed righteousness. But it limits itself simply to the imputation (of the sentence) of righteousness, or the removal of guilt. This leads to antinomianism. One will fail to take any concern about conduct. I have an article written by a very well known theologian who takes this view. He says that once God has acquitted us of guilt it means that there is an acquittal of all our past sins and all our future sins---no sin will ever bring any other guilt to us forever, no matter what we do. Now if this is "by faith" as Paul says, the continuing of our faith is logically unnecessary. God simply forgives us and we have no more responsibility for it. The exhortation to Christians, in this group, is to try to remember that God is forgiving us and that we ought to rejoice and live in assurance.

The Bible guards against that sort of teaching by the word "by faith", "by believing". Justification is always by faith and we have noticed by this long study of faith, that this means a change of life, a change of the object of our faith. One of the interesting things about this is that Jesus had a word about forgiveness. He said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, we would be forgiven as we actually forgave other people. There must be a new spirit within us before we can receive the forgiveness of God. But this does not at all mean that we earn this forgiveness. God forgives us freely but then we must make an attempt to quit this sinning and not just continue to do it. But justification is not the whole of the Gospel. It must not be made to be the only aspect of salvation.

(A question arises in Chinese. It is difficult to distinguish between guilt and sin---can you help us at this point? Sin would be

the act or motive which is wrong, which breaks the law of God. Guilt is made up of two things, (1) Personal responsibility for the sin (that is, the person was capable of knowing he did wrong, he did wrong knowingly and he had the power not to do it if he had availed himself of it) and he is condemned as a wrong-doer by a competent judge; and (2) liability to punishment (he must accept just retribution for what he did). If we make justification mean only freedom from condemnation and punishment, as some do, it is presumed that one could go on sinning without incurring any further condemnation or fearing any punishment. This would mean, if it were true, that God no longer cares whether a Christian sins or not. In fact, a Christian's sin would no longer be sin and a double moral standard would destroy the very holiness of God which sustains the universe).

Regeneration---This word is used only once in relation to personal salvation, in the New Testament. This reference is Titus 3:5. But there are other words used in describing this aspect of redemption. One of them is be "born again", "new life", and "eternal life" in the sense of quality (this is the one that is used most in the New Testament). In the Chinese Bible there are several places where this term is found for it uses the same term "ch'ung sheng". In Titus 3:5 the word used for "regeneration" literally means renewal or bringing back life just as the earth will be reconstructed. It is the same word that is used in one other place and in that context it means the earth will be made anew and alive as in the millennium (Matt. 19:28).

One of the New Testament terms related to this thought is "eternal life." You will remember in the other class we showed that this eternal life is not length of days but it is quality of life. It is relationship to God. It is the end of death, which is separa-

tion from God, so that it is union with God in a moral sense.

There are some who build a doctrine of security on regeneration alone. They will say that if we have this new life, we cannot possibly die. It has no moral quality, it is simply that we have an extension of life which cannot be extinguished. We will not go into the errors of it but those who believe in this as the only basis of security, tend also toward antinomianism. They believe "once I am born nothing can destroy life". But the New Testament also guards against that by making faith, or believing, the condition for receiving eternal life. This keeps it in a moral relationship to God rather than just a metaphysical fact which simply means we live forever. The Bible keeps regeneration a moral relationship by the use of the word "faith".

Sanctification is a temple term. One of the important meanings in scripture is the complete dedication of ourselves to God and God accepting us as His own. This has to do mostly with the way we live. It is a life relationship. It has to do with our heart commitment and our relationship to others. It is separation of ourselves to God. It is a heart wholly loving God without the divisions of loyalty which defines impurity and carnality. If we base our doctrine of security on sanctification alone we have trouble. The danger is that the emphasis on self-commitment and separation from the world will engender self-righteousness and spiritual pride if we separate it from the other truths of scripture.

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sanctification is by faith. We are kept every moment by a continuing trust in Christ. As we walk in the light...the blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleansing from all sin. As Thomas Cook said, "He keeps on cleansing us every Now."

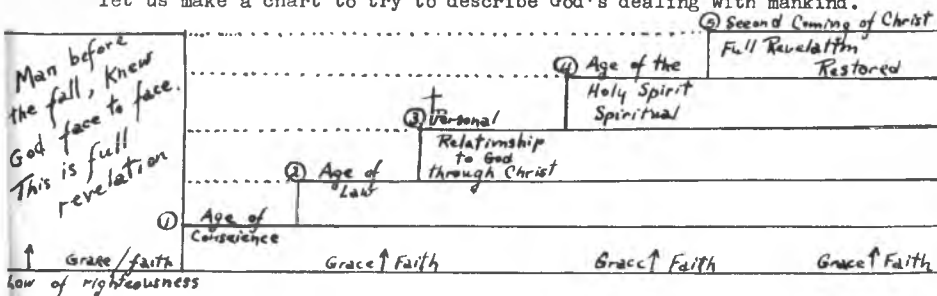
In the New Testament, the truth is that these are not different things but are different sides to one thing and it has to be put into a single unit. The man himself must be in relation to God in the picture that all of these contribute to. Eternal security will not be justification alone, or regeneration alone, or sanctification alone but only as these are all seen together. Remember all three are BY FAITH. Each begins in the moment one turns to Christ. But each describes a different aspect of salvation and involves the Christian in a particular relationship to it. Eternal security is in the confluence of all three and consequently is conditional, not absolute.



## Lecture #12

A question is raised by this study which is important enough to spend time with. The question has to do with the salvation of the heathen. Can they be saved? There are some places in the world so far removed from our society that the people do not know about the Gospel. No one has brought it to them. How will God treat these people?

We have tried to establish the facts that, (1) Only in Christ can anyone be saved; (2) Because of Christ any man may be saved; (3) God has made man a responsible being and compels him to make decisions which involve him in certain consequences. The answer to our question will have to take these things into consideration. With Paul's discussion of this matter in Romans 1 and 2 as a background, let us make a chart to try to describe God's dealing with mankind.



1. The full revelation of God to man was lost in the fall of Adam. Mankind was left without spiritual light. But men did not lose anything essential to humanity. The one important difference between men and animals is the ability to make decisions about right and wrong and the power to choose which way they will take. The standard of what may be right and what may be wrong may not be un-

iversally understood by all men. In this matter the very light which was lost in the fall, alone, could give the truth. But even in the absence of knowing what is the real "right", every man knows he ought to do the right even though doing right might bring loss and suffering to him. In the first period of time after the fall there was nothing to bring light to men except what memory may have <sup>been</sup> left from the Garden of Eden. Paul, in Romans, tells us that men rejected what could have been known of God. For this they were fully responsible. The light was not great but they were only responsible for that they could know.

(2) In the progress of revelation, God gave the law to Moses. The law is not something different by way of God's dealings with mankind. It was greater light on what was always true. Paul says the law was the "form" of knowledge and truth". This means that the law was given to guide conscience. The sin of the Jewish nation was not that they did not keep the law, but that they divorced the law from conscience. Both Paul and Jesus condemned those who kept the letter of the law without keeping the spirit of it. Now, the heathen, according to Romans 2, who did not have the law will not be judged by the law but by the light they do have.

(3) Jesus came as the revelation of God as a Person, not simply a set of laws. Again, this is not a new truth in the world but more clear light on the oldest and most fundamental of all truths. When men come into the right relation to God, conscience is not by-passed but utilized to its fullest capacity. Law is not cancelled, but lifted up into its highest form. It is most significant that Jesus should say that loving God with our whole beings and loving others as ourselves should answer every demand of God on us. This makes faith

personal and moral rather than simply formal and intellectual. In Christ, conscience, law, and worship are tied into one vital unity.

(4) The coming of the Holy Spirit does not change the basic pattern. In a real sense Pentecost did not give us anything new but it did open the door to a source of brighter light on the dark mind of mankind. Here is Jesus personalized to everyone. The work of the Holy Spirit is to quicken the deepest area of man's heart. Conscience is illuminated and motives are challenged. Law is brought to bear on conscience. And the whole of man is brought face to face with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We call this a spiritualizing of all of life. This means that gradually every human act and thought and practice is brought under the scrutiny of God so that our powers are brought under the control and discipline of the Spirit. This is the highest moral and intellectual life possible to mankind.

(5) The second coming of Christ will not bring a new law of righteousness, or a new way to be saved. It will be the beginning of the final stage of revelation which will restore the full measure of revelation and bring broken mankind back to full responsibility. Conscience will be sharpened; Law will fully inform conscience but Christ will be again made face to face with us as at the beginning.

With this as an explanation of the chart, the following observations may help to give us a better answer to the problem before us.

1. It seems to be misleading to say that any age is an age of grace more than another. Always God's grace made it possible for men to be in the right relationship to God. This was true before the fall and will be true after the coming of Christ in His glory.

2. Righteousness has always been by faith, before the coming of

law and actually before the fall. It will always be true.

3. Salvation, then, is not different for different people or for different ages. The difference is not a method of salvation but the measure of light by which men make decisions. As light increases more is required of men. But at no stage is less required than the most men can offer.

4. The most fundamental requirement is acting on the basis of conscience. At no stage up to heaven itself, can conscience be neglected. It is the foundation of all that follows.

Now, one more question needs to be clarified before we can propose some kind of an answer to our question. Who is a heathen? There are many people in the world who live in the various stages of revelation. It is as if they were caught somewhere behind the march of history and they live in a much dimmer light than Christianity gives us. The fact is that within the Christian world there are individuals who are as heathen; some because of mental deficiencies, others because the light of the Gospel has been so obscured by men who should be giving it out and who fail to do so, some simply because they are children who know no more than any ignorant heathen person.

So our original question is bigger than we thought at first. Heathenism is not confined to geographical areas but may exist anywhere in varying degrees and for various reasons. Even a child has less light than an adult so must be included in the question. Because no man is devoid of a conscience (if he is considered responsible at all) and because some light is given to it and because the Holy Spirit strives with all men, we may conclude that it is

theoretically as possible for heathen men to be saved as it was in the age of conscience. It is not simply what men must know which determines how he is to be saved but what he does with what he knows. The basic law has never changed. Righteousness is by faith. The grace which makes this possible is purchased by the blood of Christ.

But, when we have said all this, we must be careful to complete this truth. The very need for greater and greater revelation in history is evidence of the need for greater light to the heathen. The great weight of sin and degradation makes walking in the feeble light so difficult that none but the strongest is able to do so. That which is theoretically possible may not be actually probable. If it is difficult for us who have so much light to obey God, how much more difficult it is for those without the advantage of a Christian culture.

But there is more to it than that. The ultimate question is not what God will do with the heathen, but what God will do with us if we do not share the great light we have with those who do not have it. We, as Christians, are commissioned to bear witness to Christ and to create around us an atmosphere in which others will find it more easy to obey conscience and God's revealed truth.

(Comment from the Class)

Professor, may this word be added? Since it is so very, very difficult for a person who is surrounded by evil influences to live according to what he knows to be right, therefore we as Christian workers must do everything we possibly can to reach as many people in the short time given us. This gives us real urgency, great urgency in making Christ known.

Yes, how very true! It is hard enough for those of us who live

in light to do right let alone those who do not have anything to help - them tell what it is.

Question: Why is not everyone's conscience the same if it is important? Answer: Conscience has two levels. The deepest level is where the great human judge decides on the right or wrong of everything we do. The judge does not make the laws of right and wrong but administers the laws at his hand. The higher level is the law library which the judge consults to determine the right or wrong of an act. For instance traffic laws are very different in Taiwan and HongKong. And as those laws are better understood in each place a car driver can become more intelligent and dependable. The judge who decides right and wrong must always be distinguished from the laws which it is his duty to refer to.

Another question, Professor: What about the insane and those mentally sick, do they have any conscience? Some do not have conscience, that is true. Yet I have seen people mentally deficient who knew when they were doing wrong. They must live up to the ability they have. Could we say this, in those of us who are real smart there are different degrees of sensitivity in the conscience. The Holy Spirit keeps sharpening this conscience as we walk with Him so that we get more and more aware---more careful about doing right and wrong. Now a child may be a very brilliant child and yet we do not hold him to the same standard that we will when he gets older. All of us are growing. We have to be patient with each other and not too patient with ourselves. We need to be very hard on ourselves but patient with each other.

To come back now to the differences between Calvinism and Armin-

ianism. There are two basic systems of theology. We are calling one, for lack of a better term, Calvinism, and the other Arminianism, Evangelical Arminianism. Remember there is much Arminianism that is not evangelical. We are only talking about the kind we feel agrees with scripture. The following chart will help us clearly see the differences:

### High-Calvinism

1. Approaches the Bible by logical categories. It is a logical system which interprets the Bible. The order of decrees becomes a method of interpretation. The system in brief: God is sovereign, absolutely sovereign and if absolutely sovereign then man is dependent, and predestination is the only method by which he can be saved. Unconditional eternal security is the conclusion of this whole system. (If this logic is carried out, moral responsibility ends as soon as one is saved)

2. Believes in Common grace (This would account for any good in man)

3. Saving grace is a different kind of grace added to it, for common grace could never become saving grace.



### Evangelical Arminianism

1. Attempts to exegete scripture, that is to study scripture and then systematize on the basis of exegesis. Instead of the method being logically determined, it is a system based on what the Bible teaches. It is a logic determined by scripture. According to the Bible there seems to be both God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Responsibility does not end when one is brought into a saving relation to Christ. It does not end with grace but continues by grace. Redemption is moral strengthening.

2. Also believes in Common grace. (This would account for any good in man.)

3. The Arminian thinks of grace in a more personal manner, that is, God is pulling all men up to the place where they can receive Him if they would. Therefore common grace can become saving grace, by faith. Common grace can issue into saving grace at the point of personal faith.

### Mild-Calvinism

1. Believes in Preventive Grace.

2. Has generally excluded all decrees except the last one from which grows the thought of unconditional security.

3. Preventive grace may lead to saving grace but when it does so it becomes efficacious grace in that the soul is unconditionally preserved in it. Moral responsibility ends in saving grace.

### Wesleyan-Arminianism

(This excludes some of the liberalistic groups)

1. Believes in Preventive Grace.

2. The only difference in Wesleyanism is that it maintains that moral responsibility continues after one has received the grace of God.

3. Righteousness is always by faith. This means that we are under the deepest moral obligation, not only to receive forgiveness but to commit ourselves to God absolutely, as life progresses.

I should state that there is a lot of Arminianism in Mild-Calvinism. My major professor, (when I was doing my doctorate) was a very good Calvinist when I first knew him. He couldn't even say "Arminianism" and say it nicely. Arminianism was a kind of a bad word to him. But he had a deep love for the scriptures. He and I talked at length on these problems. I don't think I had anything to do with it, but I watched the progress of his thinking in our conversations. He came to see that if we take moral responsibility seriously at all there must be a place where men can absolutely say, "No, I will not have Christ," even after they are saved. The scripture teaches that there is a place we must guard against even after we become believers. He was beginning to see there was a warning to believers lest they fall from grace. Believers could come to the place where they could reject Christ.

I believe, and I think all of us do, in a security in Christ. God does not easily let us go. We are still weak and needy human beings, we are still under deep temptation. I think some of us have come to the place where we have been tested until we felt we just could not hold up under the testing. Even though we have been saved and brought into a close relationship to God, there have come times when we had to hold on to God in faith by main force. The promise of God is that there would be enough grace for that deepest need.

I will go a little further and say that I believe that a Christian may come to the place where in his mind he doubts God, intellectually. He has lost grip. But at this place he will sense the help of the Holy Spirit to strengthen in the inner man even in those times of testing. If we will fight through we will find there



is something to get hold of, by the Holy Spirit's help. This is my personal conviction---I believe it is difficult for a true Christian to backslide. But it is possible that we strengthen our rejection until we say, "No, I do not want God," and just cancel Him out and, of course, that would constitute a break in relation with God. So saying that we do not believe in unconditional eternal security doesn't mean that we have to worry lest the Lord leave us when we are going through very deep problems.

I like to illustrate it by something we are doing in our homes more all the time. It comes out of a modern problem, the small Korean children without parents. Some are six, seven years old and are just running the streets of Korea with no care---just wild little creatures without any home. There are Christian homes in America which are opening their doors and saying, "We would like to adopt this child as our very own." One of my friends has taken in one of these Korean children that has had no training at all. He is just a wild animal in the home. When the child was old enough to make a decision or at least to be talked to, my friend said, "If you will try to fit into our home, I will be as patient as I can be to help you to adjust to the laws of our home." Now it is not easy to change those habits that have been established in that small child. They aren't changed overnight. The child is constantly breaking the laws of the home. He is unclean and all of that sort of thing. But my friend doesn't throw the child out everytime he breaks one of these little rules, or when he forgets and breaks the rule of the home. The biggest task my friend has is to put love around that child and help the child realize there is something he can rely upon and trust in. But if the child decides he will not submit to the home and he breaks everything and hurts normal

children, then he would cancel out his own welcome. God is just that patient and loving with us. At every point we are to commit ourselves more and more deeply to the love of God until He is able to make us more Christ-like as time goes on. There is a change that takes place within us. That's the reason we say that responsibility does not end with conversion but it really begins. This is a building, a strengthening of the moral life.

Question from the class: What would you say is the Wesleyan's greatest apprehension concerning the position of the Mild-Calvinist? Answer: The fact that there is a tendency to be careless about one's responsibility. When this point of deep commitment is not stressed, Mild-Calvinism tends to leave a new-born Christian with an inner battle between self and Christ without telling him how to solve it. Wesleyanism emphasizes the scriptures which command the person to bring himself to a total commitment to Christ so that there is a singleness of heart and a strength of character which is developed by that commitment. It is this emphasis which gives point to the whole system. It is true that Calvinism teaches the same commitment as a source of power for service, but not as the basic essential of one's relationship to Christ. The Wesleyan finds the Scriptures stressing the need for a clean heart and total abandonment to the work of the Holy Spirit equally as basic as the need for forgiveness. When the whole human heart (and total life) responds in the power given to it by grace, to the whole provision of grace in Jesus Christ, a quality of Christian experience and life results which brings glory to God and moral power to the believer.

In a final word, it is not only what we receive from God by way of forgiveness to which the Bible points us but it is also what

we bring to God by way of a totally yielded life, cleansed by the Holy Spirit, which satisfies the provision of the Gospel. Any philosophy which obscures the continuing, vital personal responsibility to God, needs again to correct its insights as compared with the Word of God.